

## Overview

### The Challenge

The physical, social, and emotional health of students can support or hinder their academic success and their success in life. State and national data reveal that many Connecticut students engage in unhealthy behaviors that are detrimental to both their health and academic success. Conversely, the number of students engaged in healthy behaviors needs to be increased. Additionally, the data indicate that school environments are not always as supportive of students' health as they could be. Yet, in spite of these and other challenges, Connecticut schools can have a powerful influence on students' wellness.



### Our Vision

Connecticut's children and adolescents are healthy, learning and succeeding in life.

### Our Mission

- ◆ Nurture the physical, social and emotional health of students through the school community.
- ◆ Promote the adoption and implementation of the national Coordinated School Health (CSH) model by establishing or enhancing partnerships in Connecticut school communities.



The national CSH model is a systematic approach to ensuring that a school community effectively links good health with educational success. CSH is flexible enough to be implemented in a way that fits the unique needs and resources of a school community.



The eight components of CSH are:

- |                              |                                                 |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| ◆ Health Education           | ◆ Physical Education                            |
| ◆ Health Services            | ◆ Nutrition Services                            |
| ◆ Healthy School Environment | ◆ Counseling, Psychological and Social Services |
| ◆ Health Promotion for Staff | ◆ Family/Community Involvement                  |



### Goals

1. Establish the state and local partnerships necessary to implement the CSH model on a statewide basis.
2. Maximize the extent to which state agencies, local agencies, and the general public understand the crucial importance of health and wellness to lifelong learning and commit to achieving those interrelated outcomes.
3. Maximize the ability of school communities to adopt and implement the CSH model by providing appropriate and necessary resources tailored to the needs of each school community.
4. Promote a healthy school environment in Connecticut school communities.
5. Foster accountability for CSH model implementation in school communities.



### Outcomes

1. Student academic performance is improved.
2. Key physical, social and emotional indicators of student health are improved.



## Our Approach

### **We believe:**

- ◆ Adults in a school community can take action to protect and build students' health by creating a healthy school environment and using effective educational strategies.
- ◆ It is vital to take a dual approach to students' health by reducing students' risky behaviors and increasing student capacity to effectively deal with current and future health challenges.
- ◆ It is important to help students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and relationships to make and practice informed healthy choices and behaviors.

### **Successful Strategies:**

- ◆ View health as having three interconnected components – physical, social, and emotional health.
- ◆ Keep a perspective that students' health is influenced in three different spheres – school, family and community.
- ◆ Take a comprehensive approach to the health of students.
- ◆ Work with school communities to develop a coordinated approach that emphasizes change in policies, environment, educational strategies, and student connectedness to school.

## Activities to Date

The CSH partnership has lead to greater collaboration among the Connecticut State Departments of Education, Public Health, and Children and Families, other community-based organizations, and local partners. This collaboration includes the following accomplishments:

### **Infrastructure**

- ◆ Carried out successful collaborations among partners, including grant applications, manual for managing asthma in schools, statewide physical activity promotions, school-based health insurance outreach, Connecticut School Health Survey, promoting a healthy school environment, and developing the HIV/STD Health Education Cadre of Trainers.
- ◆ Drafted a five-year strategic plan to adopt and implement the CSH model in Connecticut.

### **Education and Training**

- ◆ Sponsored a CSH Summit that stimulated more than 50 school districts to send teams to participate.
- ◆ Made joint presentations to health and education groups.

### **Local Empowerment**

- ◆ Implemented CSH model in three state funded pilot sites – Danbury, Granby and New Haven.
- ◆ Provided consultation and technical assistance to school districts at their request.

### **Quality Assurance and Evaluation**

- ◆ Hired an independent evaluator to evaluate and conduct strategic planning with the three pilot sites.